**Shoes To Fill**

**Written by Hannah Foden**

**And Oliver Parkes**

**Chapter 1: Growing Up**

*House Music plays – interviews recorded about adulthood and role models*

*A recorded interview plays the opinions of seven year old, Ruby*

Scene One

*Spoken*

**Clare:**  I want to be an astronaut

**Sophia:**  I want to be a sailor

**Ollie:**  I want to be a scientist

**Oliver:**  I want to be a power-ranger!

*Sung*

**All:**  Everything I wish for now will come to pass someday

Everything will go to plan

You’ll see it’ll go my way

**Eden + Ollie:** I want to marry Prince Charming

**Han + Hope:** I want to drive a fancy car

**Ma, Rach, Sop:** I want to have a family

**Oliver + Clare:** And have my own mini bar

**All:** When I finally leave school

I’ll do whatever the hell I want

No teachers and no parents

Telling me not to break the rules

**Rach + Han:** I want to run a business

**Oliver:**  I want to own a shop

**Hope, Sop, Ma:** I want to be a millionaire

**Ollie + Eden:** And we just want a dog!

**All:** There’ll be no one to tell me no

I can make my own mistakes

You can’t tell me what to do

Cos this is my own show

*Slower*

**Boys:** I want to know the answers

**Girls:** To the grown up stuff my parents know

**Boys:** I just don’t get what when and how

**Girls:** Please tell me which way to go

**Oliver:** I want to be strong just like my dad

**Rachael:** And caring like my mum

**Hannah:** Please someone help me

**Ollie:** Or just show me

**All:** So I don’t do it wrong.

Scene Two

**Hope:** Well when I was little, probably up to the age of what twelve or maybe ten, it was things like spiders. I was scared stiff of spiders, thunder storms, I was scared of Mrs Clark at my primary school. I used to try and not go into school because of her. I suppose I was scared of getting into trouble, you know, you’re scared of being told off. But of course when you’re little you’re not scared of anything else because your mum and dad worry about that, don’t they?

Scene Three

**Clare:** 17th December

Dear Diary

Got up early and found that it’s snowed! Shoved Amy in her bed next to me and we flew downstairs like little children, flung our shoes on and ran outside. It was a fair few minutes before we remembered that today is Dad’s birthday. We did the usual opening of presents and Dad and Mum celebrated with sangria for breakfast. We went out for pub grub for dinner and Amy and I had a real laugh racing each other in the snow and seeing who skidded over first. Mum and Dad joined in on the way back after they’d drank an entire bottle of wine. It was so cool seeing all of our footprints mangled together; you couldn’t tell whose were whose.

23rd February

Dear Diary

Ok something weird is going on. So Mum went out yesterday. She had this work thing and she didn’t come home for dinner. Me, Amy and Dad waited up for her for ages. We watched loads of crappy TV. Dad drank an entire bottle of wine. He didn’t look good when I went upstairs to bed. In the night I got up to get a glass of water from the kitchen. Mum’s shoes still weren’t on the rack by the door. I guess she stayed over at a friend’s.

24th February

Dear Diary

Mum’s shoes still weren’t there this morning. There was an empty space on the rack. Dad was really odd as well. He didn’t eat breakfast with us. He just sat gazing out of the window. I didn’t know what to do. I need to look after Amy, shield her from whatever is going on here. She relies on me. When I tried to speak to Dad, he either ignored me or just didn’t hear. His eyes just fixed blankly on the fir tree outside. They were glazed over and kind of unfocused if that makes sense?

24th February - later

Dear Diary

So Mum’s shoes were there when I got back from school. Their room was quiet but I could hear a low mumbling. Mum. Took her time! Dad’s voice sounded strange; strangled and like he had too much food in his mouth. Heavy even. Mum’s voice got louder. She sounded frustrated. Then a string of swear words. I stopped listening. I hate listening to their fights. They say things they don’t mean.

6th March

Dear Diary

Mum’s cereal has gone from the cupboard. I didn’t eat it. Neither did Amy. And I’m certain Dad didn’t. He doesn’t seem to eat breakfast now. Just has a glass of water. Doesn’t smell like it though. It’s too bitter.

17th March

Dear Diary

Ok so Mum’s shoes vanish in the evenings now and they don’t reappear until the next morning. I don’t know where she’s going but I wish she wouldn’t. Dad doesn’t eat when she’s not here. I know it worries Amy but whenever she brings it up to me, I have to just change the subject. I can’t have it worry her and affect her schoolwork. She’s so clever and is definitely going places. I refuse to allow whatever is going on with our parents to ruin her future chances.

19th March

Dear Diary

All of Mum’s shoes have disappeared now. Amy pointed it out earlier. I just said she sold them online so she can get lots of nice new ones. I don’t think she believed me. She is now at secondary school. I guess I should stop treating her like a baby but… I need to protect her. I need to look after her if Mum has…well.

20th March

Dear Diary

Mum’s left us.

Scene Four

**Hannah:** At nursery I’ll be nice to all the other kids I meet.

**Ollie:** If Mary Louise doesn’t get her grubby little mitts off of the slinky I will throw a tantrum the likes of which has never been seen before.

**Rachael:** Santa will always bring me good presents!

**Ollie:** It’s my dad in a suit. My whole life is a lie.

**Oliver:** School will be easy and fun, just like my parents always told me!

**Ollie:** They lied.

**Mandeep:** Playing an instrument will be easy.

**Ollie:** Anyway here’s Wonderwall.

**Eden:** I can’t wait to leave school!

**Ollie:** I wish I’d never left school.

**Chapter 2: A Job or Higher Education?**

Scene One

**Hope:** Then my teenage fears err …I was scared of failing exams, failing my driving test. I was scared of cycling in the dark. I was scared actually of being, at night, in the dark. I used to look under the beds… when my sister left for university… to make sure there was nobody in there. So mainly exams, studying. Scared of that side of things cos that’s all you had really. Wasn’t really scared of anybody, like people per se. By that stage you’re not scared of your teachers. I was scared of spots. Yeah, that’s the last thing you want as a teenager, especially before a date.

Scene Two

**Clare:** I always wanted to be a nurse. I don't know why but... when... at one point when I was about four... and I'd obviously said I wanted to be a nurse and got a nurse’s uniform... and we used to live on a main road... and there was a huge car accident outside... and, sadly, this lad across the road, he did survive it but he was disabled for the rest of his life. He was in a wheelchair and really badly brain damaged. But I, at four years old, went out there with my nurse’s uniform and my little bag to see what I could do to help. And I can remember my poor mother having an absolute dicky fit. Oh my God she's gone, got out there, cause we used to have a shop… and I'd like managed to get around the cor…cor… counter and out and go there with all the ambulance men and was like just standing there in th-the middle of all this, this terrible accident. So it's just something I've always wanted to do and I don't know why. Obviously it was in my blood.

Scene Three

**Eden**: When I turned 18, I was scared

Not excited

**Sophia:** These next few years would be amazing

Or so I had hear d

**Eden:**  But there're a lot of things

They don't quite tell you

Things you have to know

Things you must do

**Sophia**: My first adult decision

Was a choice between two

Stay where I was and get a job

Or go to uni

Study and probably party a lot too

**Eden**: I chose education

**Sophia:**  I chose work

**Eden**: I didn't really know what else to do

**Sophia:**  I wasn't sure this would be right for me

**Both**: But I was ready to try and be ‘grown up’

**Eden**: So I packed my bags and headed off

Full of nerves, excitement and fear

**Sophia**: Barely 3 months in

I realised I didn't really fit in here

But I stuck it out

**Eden:** I made great mates

And partied all night long

I learnt how to look after myself

**Both**: But sometimes I still get it wrong

**Eden**: I can cook

I can clean

**Both:** I can do adult things

**Eden:** The problem is, I'd rather not

I'd rather pretend I'm still in my teens

**Sophia:** I'd rather make mistakes and still get drunk

Lie in till noon and be immature

Than face to up the fact that

**Both:** I'm not a kid anymore

**Eden**: Soon I’ll be leaving uni

And once again I have no clue

I guess that's what growing up is really

Deciding who to be, and what to do

**Sophia**: But what if I make a mistake?

What if it isn’t right?

What if I don’t do as well as my brother, mum or dad?

**Both:** These shoes are on way too tight.

**Eden**: What if I can’t get a good job?

And what if it all goes wrong?

How am I supposed to make it right?

**Both:** And make these shoes stay on?

**Sophia**: I don’t want to fall off the bandwagon

I want to step up to the plate

**Eden:** I want to make the right choice

I just hope I don’t make it too late.

*A recorded interview plays Luke speaking about his role models*

Scene Four

**Hannah:** At University I will have a social life, a job and hobbies!

**Ollie:** Choose one.

**Rachael:** When I work, I’ll be able to afford really nice clothes!

**Ollie:** I sold my cat for a pair of socks.

**Oliver:** I will make the friends I’ll spend the rest of my life with at University!

**Ollie:** I am thirty grand in debt.

**Mandeep:** When I’m at work I’ll still have time to do things!

**Ollie:** I haven’t seen daylight in three months.

**Eden:** When I leave Uni, I’m gonna get such a mint job!

**Ollie:** We need another cheeseburger at the drive-thru.

**Chapter 3: Finding “The One”**

Scene One

*Sung*

All: I want to find my soul-mate

Right off the movie screen

It would be so perfect

You’ll see what I mean:

Op, Os: I’d learn to dirty dance with you

Ha, Ho: I’d swap my fins for legs and walk with you

Ra, So: I’d drive a flying car with you

All: I’d be anyone you want me to

Girls: Oh why can’t I find the Harry to my Sally?

All: Surely I need movie love… to be happy?

Ha: But life doesn’t have Disney style adventures

So: We don’t fall in love at first sight

Op, Os: We don’t get to have epic battles

Ra: Then be rescued by the knight

Boys: And what if this knight wants a prince?

Girls: And the princess wants a dame?

All: We’re shown so many stereotypes

But no two people are the same

All: We’re shown ideals of what seems “right”

By characters from books, films and TV

But how can I relate their stories to real life?

Boys: When nothing like that has ever happened to

All: me?

Scene Two

**Eden:** Just got back from London. We went out for afternoon tea at the Ritz to celebrate Mum and Dad’s Silver Wedding Anniversary. They’ve been married for 25 years. Imagine still being with that one person after 25 years. It’s just lovely. I’d love to find that. You know, choosing one person to spend your life with and not leaving their side. Sticking together through thick and thin, sickness and health and all that jazz. But you know, if I turn out to be anything like my parents (in any aspect really) - I'll be so happy with the life I’ve managed to create.

Scene Three

**Rachael:** I was 17 when I left home and a lot built up to that moment. My dad came to this country when he was five. My parents got married because my dad was handed a photo of my mum and thought she was pretty, so she came over from India when she was 21 and had my brother a year later and five years later had me.

My brother was a typical Singh, a Sikh boy. He had the beard, the turban, fluent in Punjabi and all the aunties loved him. Whilst I was a coconut – brown on the outside, white on the inside who had all white/black friends. I stayed away from the Asians because I didn’t get along with them. Plus brown guys aren’t my type.

I always say I hate my community but I love my religion. Sikhism is my everything. If I didn’t have it I’d have keeled over with my depression. My family knew about my opinions of the Asian community and brown boys. And this caused the whole situation. I overheard my mum talking to my Nani in India asking if the photos had arrived for the boys to see. And from that I knew I was screwed.

I got in touch with the police and they helped me out a lot. One day they asked me to go to the magistrate’s office I think, and it was around the time the London riots had happened and reached Nottingham and people were getting booked. Anyway I went there and asked what was the matter and told me they needed my DNA. So I let them take my bloods, swab my mouth and fingerprints. They then took a mould of my mouth. The mould was banana flavour and asked them why it was necessary. They hesitated for a moment and explained they’d need to refer to it just in case I was caught and set alight like in other cases.

But eventually my boyfriend and I were able to move a bag of clothes, important items like GCSE’s and birth certificates. I did this once a week for a year before I could move in with him. When it came to the day of moving out it was planned to the “T”. I made sure my parents and brother were at work and I had everything packed early in the morning and a letter explaining everything. I also made sure to see everyone out and tell them I loved them and gave them one last hug and kiss. They didn’t say it back but I knew they did.

I miss my family. I’ve not had contact with them for three years on May 12th. I don’t blame them for what happened, I blame my community and I’d never want my children to know this or be a part of that community.

Scene Four

**Clare:** Hello, winky face, kiss.

**Oliver**: Hello, kiss.

**Clare**: How are you sweetie? Kiss.

**Oliver:** I’m good thank you, yourself? Kiss.

**Clare:** Even better after talking to you. Your pictures, camera emoji*,* look great by the way, thumbs up, kiss.

**Oliver:** Thank you, blush face, kiss.

**Clare:** So what…

**Ollie**: …Brings a fittie, bikini emoji, like you to tinder? Kiss, kiss, kiss.

**Eden:** Urm, hopefully to find a lovely guy, man and woman holding hands emoji, cute smiley face. Yourself? Kiss.

**Ollie:** To meet a fit girl, two girls with bunny ears emoji, to be honest. Winky face, kiss, kiss, kiss.

**Eden:** Hehe. Kiss…

**Ollie:** So you met up with many from here? Kiss.

**Eden:** I have been on a couple of nice dates, but unfortunately nothing has come from them. Not met THE ONE, arrow emoji, one. You? Kiss.

**Ollie:** Yeah had a few fun meet ups. Winky face. Kiss. Are…

**Clare:** …You big? Kiss, kiss, kiss.

**Oliver:** Sorry? Shocked face.

**Clare:** Like do you do gym and stuff? Flexed bicep emoji, winky tongue face, kiss.

**Oliver:** Oh, well I do like to keep fit, I play a bit of football, sports trophy emoji. Kiss.

**Clare:** How tall are you? Kiss.

**Oliver:** About 6”2. Why? Kiss.

**Clare:** Wow quite big then, winky face, kiss kiss.

**Oliver:** Urm yeah? Kiss.

**Girl 1** *stands up and taking a selfie with a lot of cleavage, she pushes her boobs up a bit to ‘enhance’ the picture.*

**Clare:** You should check me out, camera emoji, winky face. Kiss, kiss, kiss.

**Oliver:** (*Winces)* Oh urm nice, you have urm really big urm…eyes, eyes emoji, kiss.

**Clare:** Well they are my best feature, winky face. Kiss. Kiss. Kiss.

**Oliver:** So urm what…

**Eden:** …Do you do?

**Ollie:** Oh I’m an artist, artist palette emoji.

**Eden:** What kind of art do you make?

**Ollie:** I like to paint. And sculpt and stuff. Mostly like the human body. Maybe you could model for me one time? No one under 18 emoji.

**Eden:** Urmmmm…

**Ollie:** So you wanna…

**Clare:** …Do it? Kiss, kiss, kiss.

**Oliver:** *(Startled.)* Sorry, do what? Shocked face.

**Clare:** Like meet up and stuff. Winky tongue face, kiss face, wide eyed smiley face. Kiss, kiss, kiss.

**Oliver:** Well I suppose we could go for a drink, tropical drink emoji*,* at the weekend and get to know each other? Kiss.

**Clare:** I have a free house tonight if you wanna come round. Peeling banana emoji. Winky tongue face. Kiss, kiss, kiss.

**Oliver:** Urm well…I think I would rather meet up somewhere urm less urm intimate maybe. Somewhere we can really get to know each other?

*Pause*

**Clare** + **Ollie:** Boring. Skulls emoji.

*Pause*

**Oliver:** (*looking a bit put off)*  Do you mind me asking what you are looking for from tinder?

**Clare:** (*Really slowly mimicking the actions as she picks the emoji’s*) Pointy finger… okay hand sign… splashy symbol… kiss… kiss… kiss kiss, kiss.

**Oliver:** (*Shocked as he sees the emoji’s)* Oh, urm I think we’re…

**Eden:** …After different things, urm it was nice chatting to you though. Kiss.

*Very long pause.*

**Clare** + **Ollie:** You horny? Kiss. Aubergine emoji.

Scene Five

**Mandeep:** There are so many footprints to see

Running, walking, skipping, jumping

Filling the space, marking the sand, marking the snow.

Always entwined, you forget whose are whose

You will never know.

Some feet are big, some are small

Some shoes are scary to fill

And sometimes you sit and ponder

Do you want to step into their shoes, and if you ever will.

Scene Six

**Hannah:** I met my wonderful Peter in 1958 at a friend’s birthday party. We liked each other straight away and enjoyed the same sort of things, mainly dancing, which Peter was really good at, and I loved dancing with him.

Peter was at college when I first met him, and he was very clever, and sailed through his exams to get his qualifications as an electrician. He always had a job and worked very hard all his life. I didn’t earn very much money at Boots but he always looked after me. He was so generous and was always buying me things even though I was constantly telling him not to. We knew we were meant for each other and got engaged in 1960.

But then things didn’t go quite as smoothly. I haven’t mentioned but I am a Roman Catholic and went to a very strict Catholic school where I was taught by nuns and it was always thought I would get married in a Catholic church. My Mother and Father were Irish Catholics, very strict. Peter was Church of England. But as he loved me, he was happy to get married in a Catholic church. So we went to see the priest to arrange the marriage but he was not very happy as mixed marriages, as they were called then, were not very acceptable. However, he did say that it would be alright if Peter had six lessons in the Catholic Faith which he agreed to. The priest then said we both had to sign to say we would bring up any children we had in the Catholic Faith and neither of us agreed with that. We thought they should make up their own minds when they were old enough.

So we went home and my Father said he would have to give his blessing once we got married in a church. We went to our local Church of England and I couldn’t have been made more welcome. We had a wonderful wedding on 19th August 1961. Our children followed and they were christened in the Church of England. My Peter and I never talked about religion and it was never an issue. We loved each other too much to let religion get in the way of our happiness.

Scene Seven

**Hope:** Meeting someone…hm. Well I guess I always worried that I’d die alone, you know? I mean I was always so…so…shy around other people, especially boys. I fancied people, don’t get me wrong, but I never actually had the balls to...to ask the guy out that I liked since secondary school. I liked him for years and I just never… never actually really spoke to him. I think I regret that a bit, you know? But then one holiday with the Venture Scouts, well, I met your dad. I was 18, he 21. And we just hit it off. He was shy too but that was ok… we felt comfortable with each other. And well… that was 27 years ago now. The rest you could say is history.

Scene Eight

**Hannah:** I will meet the one, on the first date I ever go on, and we will be together forever!

**Ollie:** I will meet SOMEone, on A date, but then split up again when you find their other family in Mexico.

**Rachael:** Sex is good, clean fun.

**Ollie:** Sometimes sex isn’t even good.

**Oliver:** Playing an instrument is always a turn on.

**Ollie:** Wonderwall only gets you so far.

**Mandeep:** Cuddling after sex will be great – just like the movies!

**Ollie:** Yeah sorry I’m out of tissue.

**Eden:** Tonight’s date is going to be so good!

**Ollie:** He works for BNP.

**Chapter 4: Becoming a Parent**

Scene One

**Ollie:** I didn't plan to be parent. I have a girlfriend and she got pregnant and I became dad. I didn't plan to be dad and that was difficult. My wife gave birth to my daughter. For 4/5 month she stay with her sister and when I saw my daughter I decided that I don't want her to be with another man. And I took her to my mother and father’s home and we lived there 5/6 years and in the meantime she started school. So then she was in the 2nd year school and war started in my country. And we had to leave. And what was interesting maybe is that the worst day in my life when I have to be separated from my daughter.

**Sophia:** My hometown was occupied. And the only… er… only the children, women, old people had a chance to leave that town. And it was then that I have to say goodbye to my family and I didn't know if I would see her again or not. That is maybe a big obstacle in my life...to be parent. And after maybe few months I met her again, but that time she was in other country and I was there. Er… I had to go to another army because they forced me to fight for that other country. And I had to leave that country as well and again I had to leave my daughter behind ...me. And… er… I came to England, that was May 1992 and… er… in August 1992 my daughter came to England and we’ve lived together since then.

Scene Two

**Clare:** When you find out that you are going to be a parent, many emotions go through your mind: euphoria, excitement, trepidation, fear. Will I be a good parent? Can I provide the guidance, love, financial support a child will need? Will I be a good role model for another human being? You then look to your own failings… worried they will pass on to your child. I knew it would be hard… giving up work, only having one income coming in, the sleepless nights. Would I be able to cope every single day? Would I be able to bring them up properly…teaching them right from wrong and valuable life skills. I wouldn’t be able to go out with my friends as often. I would have to become more responsible.

**Mandeep:** But these things become so insignificant when he or she is born…when you hold your new born baby in your arms, it clutches your finger… holds on tight. Life becomes a learning curve for you as well as for the child you bring up; the highs, the lows, the laughter and the tears. As your children grow, you find yourself growing too. You realise aspects of yourself that you never knew you had, never knew existed. There is no greater gift than when your children bring their own children into the world and you can watch them proudly begin the journey that you started with them.

**Rachael:** And all those expectations in the beginning, although true, I really needn’t have worried, as mine have turned out undamaged and are their own people with their own personalities and opinions. Yes, there have been tough times… but you learn to cope with the dirty nappies, the broken sleep patterns and the lack of money, the temper tantrums and stroppy teenage years. It’s all worth it.

**Eden:** After all I guess parenthood is like a book… there are lots of surprises… and you never know what’s going to happen in each chapter.

Scene Three

**Hope:** And then I suppose as I got older I would have been scared of not ever being able to have children. And I wasn’t scared… well not so much for me… I was more scared of your Dad losing his job or something. When you were a baby… scared of you being ill and catching something horrible like meningitis. I think when the children are little you’re just scared for their health. I suppose I used to fear like… you weren’t popular and you didn’t have any friends. You fear as well that they’ll get into the wrong crowd and start smoking or doing something else that’s really stupid… or getting pregnant at 16… fears of you growing up really.

Scene Four

**Ollie:** Well where to start… coming into a fully grown family was really scary, not only was I nervous every time I saw my new girlfriend, but I also had to see her three grown up children. The eldest daughter made me feel quite at home but the second daughter was very rarely there, and when she was, she very rarely spoke. Then there was the boy. Well he never came out of his bedroom so it was hard to build a relationship with him. When I moved in with my girlfriend, I was so nervous as I still felt that her children hadn’t really accepted me. I mean, the eldest was the only one who really spoke to me. I used to clean, cook, wash and dry all the clothes with no help from the children whatsoever. They just came in, stuffed their faces, left the pots and buggered off to their bedrooms or went out. This was all so frustrating for me. I started to ask myself what had I let myself in for?

Things continued like this for about six months. But I have always kept trying and I’ve never given up. It’s funny, the eldest daughter who accepted me was actually the first to turn on me and the lad who never accepted me is now my soldier. I have such a great relationship with this boy now, I mean I see him as my son and I would do anything for him. I feel so so proud when he calls me… dad.

Scene Five

**Hannah:** Children are good, clean fun.

**Ollie:** Children aren’t even clean.

**Rachael:** Just because I have a child it doesn’t mean I can’t have a social life!

**Ollie:** I have more contact with the Teletubbies than I do real human beings.

**Oliver:** I’m not going to be one of those parents that shares everything their child does on the internet.

**Ollie:** I’m sorry. I really am.

**Mandeep:** I’m not gonna be one of those parents that has ridiculous superstitions in raising their children.

**Ollie:** No Mary Louise you know you can’t eat red foods after six or you’ll get spots. Now put down the ketchup.

**Eden:** Babies are adorable!

**Ollie:** We all know that one baby.

**Chapter 5: Growing Old**

Scene One

**Hope:** I suppose now I’m starting to fear getting older. Well, there are some horrible illnesses. Heading towards the end of your life and stuff… yuck, I don’t like hospitals. You go in there and come out with something else. I really do fear old age… not being able to take care of myself anymore… having to rely on other people, my children. I worry still for you… but I guess that never goes for a parent really. I want you to get yourself a good job, meet a nice man who won’t beat you up or go off with another woman or something horrible like that. I just ... that’s one of my fears, you see. I hope you’ll do well in life and meet nice people and settle down and have a lovely little family and comfortable home like we’ve had.

Scene Two

**Hannah:** When I retire, I won’t become a gardener like every other old person.

**Ollie:** Soon my petunias will be in full bloom.

**Rachael:** I’ll only pop pills in my teens and early 20’s.

**Ollie:** Now I’m old I have to take 15 tablets a day.

**Oliver:** When I get to retire, I’ll do all the things I didn’t get a chance to before!

**Ollie:** I’ll probably still be working after I’m dead.

**Mandeep:** I’m going to proudly accept grey hair and not change it!

**Ollie:** Yes, I’m 84. Of course this colour is natural! Hahaha…ha.

**Eden:** Bingo is always going to be boring to me, even when I’m old.

**Ollie:** TWO FAT LADIES! GET IN.

*pause*

**Sophia:** I’m going to live to be 100.

**Ollie:** No… I’m sorry.

Scene Three

*(Voice over)*

**Sophia:** Dear Diary

It’s been a year since I got told the news. I can still remember it clearly. Some bored sounding receptionist rang up first thing and bluntly stated I was urgently needed to return now that my scan results and blood tests and everything were finally in. So I went. On my own. I couldn’t exactly ring up my sister and demand she drive me. She has her five kids to watch out for. My Henry would have driven in a jiffy but… well. A lot has changed. It’s been eight years. The years blur into each other now. Since the headaches started. Her eyesight is not like she had when we were girls. Funny that. Seeing her in specs. I remember happily running around in the snow, our dance classes, cinema…pub grub and the like. No glasses needed. Simpler times. But then life’s a funny thing really, isn’t it?

*Flashback to the previous year*

**Oliver:** Mrs Thompson? Thank you for coming in so promptly.

**Sophia:** Well the receptionist said it was urge –

**Oliver:** *(Interrupting abruptly)* Right, well best get on with it all. The results were obviously unsatisfactory last time so then we gave you a CT, MRI and PET scan. Right, I now have these results. Your brain functioning is just not what it should be, Mrs Thompson. You really did come to us very late. *(Slight pause)* You have a brain tumour. There is unfortunately no cure for this stage of your illness.

**Sophia:** I’m sorry I don’t fully understand, I thought you said –

**Oliver:** Well these are the facts, Mrs Thompson. Even though you are only, what is it… (*checks through his notes)* 63, you have all the signs. Is there someone you would like to call before we discuss how to proceed?

**Sophia:** Well… maybe my Henry – no wait. My mum. Actually yes I really want to call my mum, please. But I don’t know where she is… maybe my sister?

**Oliver:** Right. Now the next steps are going to be unsettling for you. You are at quite an advanced stage. More so than anyone would like, but we are where we are. I need you to fill out these forms –

*Flashback fades*

*(Voice over)*

**Sophia:** It’s all a bit of a blur really. My sister was round straight away when I forced myself to call her. I hate to worry her. I’ve always managed to protect her… but well I don’t really want to be alone anymore. I’ve been alone it seems such a long time. Henry was my… well he was my rock. He looked out for me. My teens were a bit tough and then when Amy went to uni… well I didn’t really know what to do with myself. But then I met him. And my life was almost complete again in a way.

I wonder what she’s doing now. Is she alive? Dad died too soon. He liked the drink a bit too much after… she left? Yes that’s right. Pub grub… we…we went for pub grub and everything was…was fine. It’s not fine now. It’s funny how you spend life trying to forget the bad things but when you don’t have the choice to hold onto them… you never want to let them go… good or bad.

You know, me and Amy… we…we played in the snow. Our footprints… so many footprints. But people just leave. Their footprints melt away and disappear. Gone.

Scene Four

*Sung*

**Ollie:** I figured out some answers

To the grown up stuff my parents knew

**Hannah:** But it turns out that life is just

A learning curve for me and you

**Rachael:** Travel the world and find yourself

Get married start a family

**Oliver:** Find a job you love and then retire

Or just don’t listen to me!

**Han + Rach:** The world’s your oyster so they say

Crack it open find the pearl

**Sophia + Hope:** Be the best self that you can be

Let your story unfurl

**All:** And now our show is at an end

Please leave with one thing in mind

The only shoes you need to fill

Are those life helps you find.